Useful links and places:

-Catholic Worker international websites:
www.catholicworker.com
www.catholicworker.org
www.lacatholicworker.org/
www.ca.geocities.com/vancouvercatholicworker/

-Radical/Progressive Christianity
www.jesusradicals.org
www.nonviolentjesus.blogspot.com
www.catholicanarchy.org
www.anarchocatholic.typepad.com/
www.anglocatholicsocialism.org/
www.disseminary.org/

-Anti-War
www.stopwar.ca
www.ivaw.net
www.resisters.ca
www.wri-irg.org

-Other Activism
www.foodnotbombs.net
www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/
www.iww.org
www.ploughshares.ca/
www.lovarchy.org/
www.eugenevdebs.com/
www.freegan.info/?page=home

-Cool Places:
www.spartacusbooks.org
www.kalayaancentre.net
www.commongroundrelief.org/
www.freewebs.com/stormnyc/index.htm
www.jonahhouse.org

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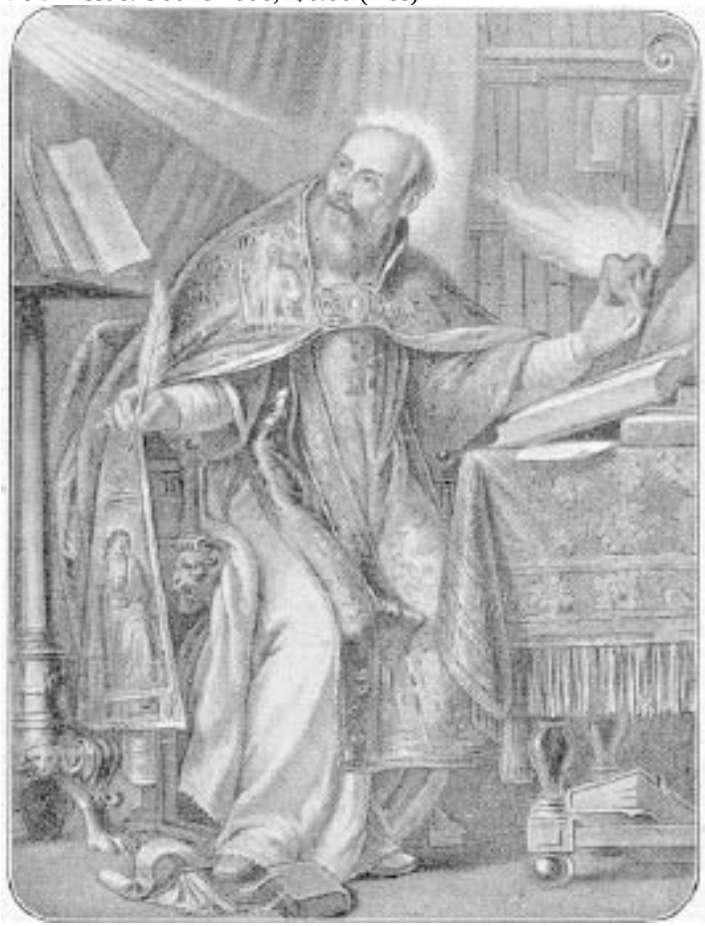

picture of Saint Augustine

MIGRANT WORKER THREATENED WITH REPATRIATION FOR VOICING CONCERNS ABOUT WORKPLACE AND LIVING CONDITIONS

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Marcos Baac is a migrant worker who arrived in Canada in January 2006 under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) and was sent to work at the Golden Eagle farm in Pitt Meadows, British Columbia. Last week he was informed that his contract is being terminated and that the employer would like to send him back to Mexico. He strongly believes he is being sent back to Mexico because he has spoken publicly about the poor working and living conditions under the SAWP.

In April 2006, after failed attempts to bring their concerns directly to the employer and the Mexican consulate, Baac, along with 31 other workers at the farm, wrote a public letter outlining several workplace and living condition grievances. Some of the problems the workers highlighted in their letter were:

1. Lack of bathrooms, drinking water, and the lack of shelter were they could stay out of the rain while they eat during working days in the fields.

2. Insufficient working hours: the workers came under a contract stipulating an average of 40 hours a week. They claimed they were getting insufficient hours to cover their living expenses, leaving little or nothing to send back to their families in Mexico, which is the main reason they've come here in the first place.

3. Rude and abusive treatment by their supervisors.

4. Difficulty in getting proper medical treatment when the workers became ill.

5. Breach of their contract, which said that they were to work in a greenhouse and not in outdoor blueberry and cranberry farms in the winter.

Shortly after the release of this letter, several articles appeared in the media, including a local paper in the Pitt Meadows area; once their plight was exposed the employer began correcting the problems outlined in the letter. However since their public stand, the workers have also felt greater pressure and harassment from their employer and Marcos has been given no reason for the termination of his contract. It seems clear that the consequence for Marcos being vocal and legitimately speaking out against workplace abuse has led to his employer terminating his contract and highlights the extremely precarious and vulnerable position of migrant workers.

BACKGROUND ON SAWP

The Mexican worker was employed under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP) negotiated between the governments of Canada and Mexico. Migrant Mexican workers are compelled to come to work in Canada as a result of the devastating impact that economic agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have had on the Mexican countryside. Workers under this program have a contract and are in Canada on a temporary working visa.

Workers in the SAWP are excluded from basic labour protections as a result of both their status as temporary workers, and as the result of their exclusion from many of the basic health, safety and working standards which apply to other Canadian workers. Upon arrival in Canada these workers often find themselves in precarious working, living and health situations and routinely face abuse and mistreatment from their employers. The workers' complaints are rarely heard or addressed by either their employers or the Mexican consulate.

The situation of Marcos can be considered part of a broader condition of lack of justice, dignity and respect for the temporary agricultural workers that toil in the majority of Canadian farms, even when those workers come through programs negotiated between both governments to satisfy a need for labour in the agricultural sector.

Organizations and unions are deeply concerned with the situation of agricultural migrant workers like Marcos and the severe consequences he is being punished with. Jim Sinclair, President of the BC Federation of Labour, states: "Migrant workers in Canada have all the same rights as any other worker, as far as the labour movement is concerned, and deserve the full protection of the law. We are calling on Labour Minister Mike de Jong to restore the government's ability to enforce labour standards so no worker --citizen or migrant -- is subject to the exploitation we see in this case."

Migrant farm workers are in a particularly fragile position due to a lack of labour protection and a lack of permanent residency status. MP Bill Siksay, NDP Citizenship and Immigration Critic, states "Canada's policies on temporary workers demand our attention. We know that temporary workers are among the most exploited workers in Canada. Their access to labour standards protection falls far short of justice and fairness, health and safety issues dominate their workplace, and access to programmes such as Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, and language training are limited. Even though their labour is crucial to the Canadian economy, they are not afforded the possibility of permanent residence."

Immigrant and Human Rights groups such as No One is Illegal and Justice for Migrant Workers will be launching campaigns for the rights of all migrant workers under SWAP and would appreciate your support. <

I'll Not Go Quietly
By Steven Woods

Morning. A few thoughts? Sure why not? Check this out....

You're sitting there at a vegetarian kiosk in Northern California. You've spent the last several weeks squatting, hitch hiking, protesting, kicking it with some good, free thinking people. You're taking a small break, heading down to San Francisco to see what's up with the city life before getting back into the forest to continue the fight against the logging industry. An old friend is there, and you reminisce about some old people in an old place.

All of a sudden, you're approached by a police officer. They know your name, and it un-nerves you. So you give them a false one. They check your tattoos. The three roses, and vibrant green vines trailing down your arm glues up the game. You're placed in handcuffs, driven to a gulag, and subjected to varius indignities before being locked into a small concrete box with nothing but a steel slab attached to the wall and a busted toilet.

Despite the various colored activities of your past, this is the first time in a cell. You're cold, you're confused, you're afraid. You've been using some pretty strong mind-altering substances for quite a while now, and you're not really sure what's happening. If any of this is even real. And no one has even told you why you're there.

After a while you adjust, a bit dazed, and then they finally tell you what they think you did. They tell you you've killed two of your friends, they are going to seek the death penalty. They say you committed the crime in Texas, and they are going to ship you back. You have to wait because some psychopath just took out the world trade center.

You know you've never killed anyone in Texas, but it doesn't matter. You're shipped back like human cattle trussed up and

herded through the airport by a phalanx of soldiers. You're still pretty much in shock. What can you do? You go to stand trial, forced to put your trust in a system you've been told all along works. You KNOW it doesn't, but this doesn't matter either. You have no choice. You're a transient, a bum, broke, no one to turn to.

You're stuck with legal representation who aren't paid enough to care about you or your case. They barely work on it at all, no investigation, they don't do much with witnesses on the stand. So it's really no surprise....at least it shouldn't be. when eventually you're convicted. More "guidance" is presented by the state. You're a social miscreant (anarchist). you have no redeeming qualities. Your attorneys call no witnesses to refute this. Twelve of your peers deem you unfit to live. You are sentenced to death in front of an entire nation.

Afterwards, you are transferred to prison to wait several years for an ax to finally fall. Not a normal prison. You're sent to a super segregation facility. Placed into solitary confinement, isolated from the rest of humanity for the rest of your life. You are still in shock. The situation hasn't quite registered yet.

And then it does.

You've spent the last several months degraded, harassed, oppressed, provoked, trampled upon...Life becomes 23 hours in a concrete tomb. The bite of the handcuffs on your wrists every time you leave it. Meals unfit for human consumption. The glass that will eternally separate you from your loved ones. They've taken everything, they want what's left. Your humanity and your life. But you've decided you're not going to give them the first, and you're going to make them TAKE the second. In the end you are given two choices:

You can sit on your bunk and accept it.
Or you can fight back with everything you have.

But given who you are. There really is only one choice.

You FIGHT!

Ahh... I've been called to go to recreation from one cage to another.
I'll leave you for now.

In Solidarity,
Steven Woods
Polunsky Death Camp <

Humiliation, By Joy Ellison

"Grass Roots Urban Renewal in St. Louis"
By Alex Iwasa,
Socialist Labor Party of America

In March I was able to participate in some phenomenal work going on in the St. Louis Place and North St. Louis neighbourhoods, in St. Louis, MO.

In these two neighbourhoods, there are three Catholic Worker Houses, an organic urban Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm and orchard, co-housing, and a green and natural building site.

All three of the Catholic Worker Houses are utilizing old buildings and houses for new purposes, in an area where there is a number of condemned buildings, and vacant lots. In fact, where other people are having buildings destroyed to build new housing, one of the Workers, the Teka Childress House, is a fix-me-up house, currently being repaired.

Next door to the Teka Childress House is the green and natural building site, another fix-me-up house that has been condemned by the city for twenty years. Besides saving energy and resources by repairing the house, some of the eco-friendly features include an addition with natural plaster walls with straw in between and recycled denim insulation in the ceiling.

Karen House, the Worker I was volunteering at while in town, offers hospitality to women and children, and is a drop in during the day. It is in an old convent. Many of the people involved in the other Workers, the co-housing and collective house are also involved in Karen House.

On the other side of the church that Karen House was a convent for is the farm, New Roots Urban Farm. It is behind a collective house, utilizing space where several houses had been. The farm offers its shares at prices low-income people can afford, and the farmers work with children and homeless people. The collective house also contains the office of the Pruit-Igoe Development Corporation (PIDC), who has been working in the area to maintain affordable housing.

Another group, the Downtown Teens, is an on-the-job training group that employs teens from the area, while training them in construction.

The New Roots Urban Farm's orchard is behind Little House, where the co-housing, Dorothy Day Co-housing's, first unit was. There is also a green house at the Farm House, where New Roots has started a number of its seedlings. It's across the street from Carl Kabat House, another Worker that is just about to start offering hospitality. <

Photo courtesy of Vancouver Catholic Worker, Vancouver BC

Fellowship Of Reconciliation's Friendship Delegation to Iran: May 2006 Report One: An Early Start to Peace-Making
http://www.forusa.org/programs/iran/may06-1.htm

Editors Note: In May '06 The Fellowship of Reconciliation sent a group of peace delegates to Iran, The Christian Radical has been given permission to reprint the group's reports, it is my hope to include them serially throughout the coming issues CR.

Our chance to connect with Iranian citizens began in Paris, while we waited for the connecting flight to Teheran. Most of the passengers waiting for the flight were Iranian citizens and many gave a second look at the assembly of travelers wearing buttons that read "Peace Advocate" in Farsi, the language of Iran.

It wasn't long before a woman inquired about our trip, and asked if she could have a button too. Once we boarded, an Iranian man named Hassan introduced himself. He asked about the purpose of the delegation.

Hassan eagerly signed our book of messages of peace from Iranians and proudly placed one of our peace buttons on his chest. He thanked us for coming to his country saying it was a wonderful gesture of peace.

We arrived in Teheran on the evening of Tuesday, May 9, 2006, and went directly to our hotel for the night.

Our first meeting the next morning was at the Department of Human Rights at Shahid Beheshti University. This meeting began with brief statement by Richard Deats, co-leader of our delegation, about FOR's background and the purpose of the delegation, and by a round of individual introductions.Then came a welcoming address by the chair of the department, Dr. Ardeshir Amir-Arjomand. His opening words were the traditional Islamic beginning of an address, "In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful". He continued with an account of the history, purpose, organization and methods of their department.

In general, it appeared that the approach of this department to human rights reflects a balanced mix of aspirations, offset by an understanding of practical difficulties; a combination of hope and pragmatism, and an intense awareness of a world-wide need for sustained attention to improve human rights.

All present felt that there is a continuing need for discussion and action on human rights. But by reason of cultural background, it was also apparent that the two groups – the Iranians and their American visitors – would put different emphasis on various human rights issues, such as the death penalty vs. health insurance.

The programs of this department include conference and workshops, as well as regular academic study. The speakers expressed a desire to make a contribution to the promotion of human rights from the Iranian experience and culture, and based on the Islamic focus on peace. A spirited question and answer session followed, full of good will and good humor. There were 10 or 12 faculty present, about equally divided between men and women.

Where daily life IS culture

The next visit this morning was at the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization News Agency, which was founded in July 2004 by combining the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization with the Iranian Journeying and Tourism Organization. Our hosts were eight young women reporters and translators. Their work includes gathering news from Tourist Agents, Internet sources, and other news sources and to translate the material and make it available via the Internet to newspapers and tourism agencies in Iran.

The reporters asked us a number of questions, some of which concerned our impressions of Iran and these were difficult to answer since we had just arrived the evening before. We were asked why we chose to come to Iran, and we answered that Iran has a distinguished history and culture, and this is mostly unknown to Americans.

The reporters told us that there is little distinction to Iranians between culture and "daily life". We replied that Americans, who have a relatively short history as Americans, also have some connection to their ethnic heritage.

Lily Yeh showed them her work in grass-roots community building through art projects which are inspired by Islamic art.

Meeting the victims of war and chemical attack

Our final meeting today was at a rehabilitation center run by the Society for Chemical Weapons Victims' Support. We were welcomed by Dr. Shahriar Khateri, the medical director of the center, and Mohammad Reza Soroush, the head of the nongovernmental organization (www.scwvs.org).

Over 90,000 Iranians lost their lives during the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988). And many more Iranian soldiers and civilians sustained life-long medical injuries.

We listened to the personal experience of one veteran who, at the age of 15, had volunteered for the military. An exploding landmine resulted in the loss of both his arms and made him blind. Another war veteran suffering from the effects of poison gas has impaired breathing, vision and a chronic, unrelenting skin rash. He said that Iranians and Americans are not enemies, and he expressed hope that the people of the United States can co-operate to build a peaceful future.

We heard of the experience of another victim, exposed to chemical weapons when he was 21. He suffered injury to his lungs, stomach and skin, and has undergone many treatments and surgery in the past 20 years.He must use oxygen constantly in order to survive. One of his brothers was killed in the war and another is also a veteran with similar problems to his.

We also heard the story of a Kurdish father and his daughter, who live in a remote village in Northwest Iran. Two of the sons in this family were killed during the war, and the mother and another daughter died in the chemical attack.

The daughter we met was six months old when the attack occurred, and she has lost 70% of her lung capacity. She suffers from skin, heart, and lung problems and pain. She is now 19, and is losing the sight in one eye. She can no longer study because of her medical condition. She wishes for her health and to be able to return to school, and she also hopes that such weapons will never be used ever again.

Finally, Mazjar Teherani, the author of a book called Way of Peace, placed his hand on his heart and said that he wished to send life energy to all the wounded and all who suffer.

Members of our group made concluding remarks of support and heart-felt compassion.

– From the FOR Iran delegation <

Profile of a War Resister
By Kyle Snyder

I am a former United States Army Soldier, who served in Iraq in 2005, near the borders of Syria and Turkey.

I was born in Oklahoma City in 1983, Because my father was military I saw much of the world before my teens. I lived in Hawaii for four years, and later in Colorado Springs, CO.

My Parents divorced when I was about ten years old, because of the abusive nature of my father and his cheating on my mother. I was placed in the foster care systems at the age of fourteen, and spent much of my teenage life as a child who was constantly looking for answers as to why I had suffered for the actions that those who were older around me.

I dropped out of high school at an early age, and moved out of foster care at seventeen to try and work for a living. I was a telemarketer for a multi million dollar corporation called MCI, who later fired me in a sweep because the company was over 200 million dollars in debt for fraud charges brought against them in 2000.

This left me with no job and no way to pay rent to keep a roof over my head, so I decided that there was no other option than to try and straighten my life out, so I looked into a government program called "Job Corps". It is a last chance school that is built like a minimum-security prison for youth who are "At Risk" of imprisonment or other problems, homelessness, children of divorce, foster kids, etc.

During my two and a half year stay at Job Corp. I would do better than I have ever done in my life. With the help of my then fiancée, I received my High School Diploma, my G.E.D, And a Degree in landscaping to become something close to a foreman in any greenhouse or landscaping project if I would have only gone that route.

However I did not use any of these options to my advantage: I wanted more, I wanted to go to college, and become a social worker for foster children so they would not have to go through programs like "Job Corp."

I was happy, I had it all, I was twenty, engaged to a beautiful woman, I had money for the time being, and her family supported anything the two of us did as a pair.

All of that would change no more than a year and a half after meeting a man by the name of Joel Williamson, SSG (Staff Sergeant/ U.S Army Branch). He approached my fiancée and I, and preached of the materialistic benefits that the United States Army could offer a young man like myself.

Finally: my opportunity to go to a college I could otherwise not afford, an opportunity to start a life for the two of us, and an opportunity to become something in front of all of those who said I would become nothing. So why wouldn't I join? Even you would after hearing all of this guaranteed to you straight faced in front of the woman you want to make your life with. You'd be a fool not to.

I argued for months with Erin – my fiancée – as to why this would be good for the both of us. The sad part is I wish she would have won the arguments, or I should have swallowed my pride and listened closer. Too late now, I suppose. She was right all along.

During my absence Erin had a miscarriage with our child and I went through a massive depression, which still haunts me to this day because I believe it could have been prevented with medical care. However in the United States, We do not have healthcare, and if you are poor you are a statistic, nothing more, nothing less.

The military denied me any type of coverage for my pregnant fiancée because we were not married. Excuse the fact that we knew and lived together for several years.

I fought for six months to be released under medical grounds of depression; I had lost Erin, my child, and everything I gave two shits about in my life. I didn't care anymore. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, right?

So I trained. I trained to kill, to raid, to protect, to learn to embellish these principles of greed. I trained to use racism as a form of motivation, to cut off my compassion in the face of hatred, bigotry, and war. I trained to be a soldier.

I trained in everything except the explanation that was given to me by a recruiter a year and a half prior "You're gonna build roads, Kyle," all with a saintly smile.

Was I confused?

No, I wasn't. Truth is I didn't care; I could care less even now sometimes. All I can hope is that my actions to leave Iraq have slowed at least a couple of missions. Reality is we cannot change this unless we can pinpoint where it all started, and I am one of those who knows where it started. Are you? <

May Day 2006, picture by Gordon Fett

Happy Anzac Day.
By Lisa Farrall

A day in memorial of our Imperial betters ordering Australian troops to attack another country unprovoked. It stands alongside Iraq and Vietnam as a very regretful thing our nation has done.

Gallipoli is almost forgiveable, since it was so early in the 20th Century. Australia had been a Federation for little more than a decade and a nation, in the Anglo sense, for little more than a Century. Corporate media focuses on a footy game, the contemporary equivalent of bread and circuses, while some of us feel that sackcloth and ashes might be more appropriate.

Most people these days consider the war in Vietnam, Australia's involvement at least, to have been completely illegitimate and nothing to be proud of. As for the unprovoked attack and invasion of Iraq for a Corporate business agenda, a Melbourne University lecturer predicted at the outset that it would be another Vietnam. Now that our first serviceman has lost his life, it seems the prediction was on the money. What are we doing there at all?

The same lies that fooled US citizens into allowing their Government to attack another country over resources, like Japan in WW2, were used on us. We were lied to and our troops were deployed in violation of our constitution, being sent in without the approval of the citizens or Parliament of Australia. Now that a life has been lost, where does that leave us legally, I wonder?

The Australian public are stereotypically depicted by Corporate media as being too happy-go-lucky and distracted by bread and circuses to be appropriately ashamed of our Government's behaviour. However, there has been plenty of protest and even street marches in opposition. Australia is using a 200 year old system of Government comprised of a House of Reps and a Senate. Normally one expects the Senate to act as a balance for Government. Currently the Howard Government has control of

both Houses and is using its power like the Nazi's in 1930's Germany. The most recent abuse was the creation of unconstitutional laws allowing the Army to be called out against Australian citizens! And our troops are currently overseas enjoying a lesson in psychological abuse with the people who ran Abu Ghraib.

Like many in the US and UK, a lot of Australians are horrified and deeply embarrassed by the Howard Government. Like rebellious youngsters tricked by their own greed into drug-trafficking, they are seduced by the easy, sleazy money and power offered by Global Corporations. They prance about enacting "greed is good" policies, obliging every whim of those in Board rooms wearing the real power.

The Australian public are left wondering when justice will step in, like a Customs Officer pulling on the latex gloves, and bring our representatives back to actually representing the Citizens.

Despite their current arrogance and refusal to account for their behaviour, the Government is still our representatives. They are elected and employed by us. The Citizens of Australia. This is not Burma or Pinochet's Chile. We have laws here. The judiciary has not yet outlived its usefulness. The Howard Government must either remember its obligation to the Australian people or be reminded by Law.

Corporations and Banks in Australia have been permitted to advertise like pimps in velvet suits offering drugs to young homeless children. “See these beautiful houses and cars? See all this consumer bling? Sign on the dotted line for a loan or credit card and it can all be yours!” Unfortunately many of us signed, only to find we're now hocking it on the treadmill, slaving away only to hand over a large portion of our income to the pimps.

The Howard Government was able to successfully play on people's fears of either having to work harder or losing the house because of interest rate rises. Unable to manage a wheat sale successfully, it seems terrorising the public is a forte of the Howard Government. Come to think of it, that may be their only talent. When was the last time they knew anything about anything? And they want to be trusted with the Australia Card? Not bloody likely!

Despite the Corporate media ignoring the growing questioning and protest among the Australian public, many of us are very unhappy with the current state of affairs. We may have not wanted a bunch of incompetents managing the economy, but we did not vote for a recreation of Nazi Germany.

In their book "Unveiling Empire", Wes Howard-Brook and Anthony Gwyther examine the dark side of Empire with reference to the Book of Revelation. Rather than descending into another distorted attempt to translate a letter to a bunch of first century house churches in Asia Minor into a Nosatradamus copycat, they view the criticisms of the Roman Empire as they were intended, with some frightening parallels to current situations.

Many Christians are well aware of the corporate media's predictable (and illegitimate) stereotype of the Christian faith as militant puritanical moralism, and attempt to hold to real human rights ethics in spite of it. What many of us might not be aware of is that the same misappropriation of authority went on in Roman days. Populist leaders of wealthy states pretended a semblance of religious devotion in order to imply authority, which they then abused. Wealthy, powerful people stayed comfortable and powerful at the expense of the majority. Sound familiar?

Howard-Brook and Gwyther examine the criticisms of Imperial agendas made by St. John and are not afraid to make analogies to current circumstances. While obesity is one of the leading causes of ill health in wealthy countries, the two-thirds world is kept on

the edge of starvation by trade sanctions and power mongering. This is the beastly system Christians are called to resist.

While Hollywood (and certain Governments and Corporations) might be completely obsessed with violence as an answer to everything, St. John was under no such illusions. Peace through superior firepower is a lie. September 11th proved that. Violent revolution gives us "meet the new boss, same as the old boss." Changing the talking heads or stuffed shirts in Parliament doesn't alter the basic functioning of the system that produced the illegal and immoral invasion of Iraq.

There are 300 billionaires in the world today, do you think they lose any sleep over whether the Howard Government gets re-elected? Governments are puppets, nasty ones, sometimes, but only puppets nevertheless. There's no point really in having John Howard wood-chipped like Chucky, if the Australian public remain enslaved to corporate pimps.

The resistance advocated by St. John in the first century, commented upon by Howard-Brook and Gwyther, is a personal non-participation in the systemic abuse. This does not mean complete asceticism. We've had enough opportunity to learn from the mistakes of puritanical perfectionism. What it means is not exposing our selves unnecessarily to the manipulations of corporate media and Imperial agendas of control and greed. Don't let yourself be sucked in to thinking that Government is about the economy. Don't be sucked in by the fabrication of enemies in order to support a grab for power. Don't be fooled. Those in power in the Empire, any human Empire, don't give a rat's ass what your life is like. You can choose to get rich at the expense of others, as they endorse, and face oblivion if you make one false step... or you can choose to embrace real human values. Learning to trust other people is the only antidote to political scare mongering. It's hard to be jerked into fearing Islam if you spend the odd weekend around the barbie eating Middle-Eastern kebabs.

Remember treating strangers as if they were friends? How about, do unto others...? Or: Blessed are the peacemakers?

Two thousand years ago we were given a recipe for changing out of all the scare-mongering and political and corporate greed. Things haven't changed. If we get back to the basics of each managing our own lives ethically, we can make a big difference. It's the only thing that can.

Revolution is nothing if it's just a change of guard. Humans are all the one species and we really need to evolve out of greed and cannibalistic competition. Such a change of heart is at the heart of the Christian faith, as it is other religions. Buddhists, for instance, have been advocating an internal change for happiness for each person since forever. As does Islam, where the original jihad was the "holy war" each person fights internally against grasping human nature, the "old self" that keeps us from living in peace and contentment.

In the Book of Revelation, such change was pictured using the symbolic "New Jerusalem"; a city large enough to house everyone, open to people of every nation, tribe, kindred and tongue. The gates are always open so people are free to enter or leave as they will. There is no violence or coercion or terrorising the public with scare campaigns. This step in human evolution was predicted in St. John's vision, charmingly similar to the vision James Redfield has for humanity in "The Celestine Prophecy". It’s impossible to live forever in fear. It exhausts a person and results in despair or early death. Fortunately we're wired to change for the better.

So it's really quite encouraging to have a national holiday to celebrate Anzac Day. A day for us as a nation to remember the mistakes we've made by following greedy Imperial agendas. A day to remember the real cost of being unwise about our politics, hundreds and thousands of lives lost in an attack on another

peaceful nation, so someone on a Board somewhere can make another billion dollars.

A day to think about what we really want from life, is consumer bread and circuses all there is? Do we want to become another Nazi Germany? Is Pinochet's Chile or Mussolini's Italy our role model?

What we need is not more political rhetoric, coup, violence or fear mongering. What we need is a change of heart, people deciding for themselves whether they want to get off the treadmill and begin to think about life after economic rationalisation.

Anzac Day is a national day of shame, for us. A day to remember all the good reasons to start building the New Jerusalem in our own lives. <

Dinosaur Reminder by Chris Rooney

A Conversation with Jerry and Sis Levin
By Joy Ellison

In late April, Portland was graced with the presence of Jerry and Sis Levin, two people with a remarkable story. Between the two members of this husband and wife team, the Levins have decades of experience working in four different Middle Eastern countries, one PhD in peace education, eleven grandchildren, and wealth of peacemaking wisdom.

The Levins were catapulted into the international spotlight when Jerry, then working in Beirut as the CNN Middle East Bureau Chief, was kidnapped by extremists. Jerry became the first of the so-called forgotten American hostages. After eleven and a half months, Jerry was able to escape, thanks to the nonviolent reconciliation efforts of Sis, Landrum Bolling, and a team of supporters. During Jerry's captivity, each of the Levins went through deep transformations and became willing to devote their lives to the cause of nonviolence. Jerry write in his book West Bank Diary, "After my release our lives moved in dramatically new directions …We have signed on, each in our way, to struggle against both physical walls and the walls of the mind in Palestine and Israel because it's our belief that if the world can't get nonviolence "right" in the so-called Holy Land where the concept first began - then the world won't be able to get it "right" anywhere else."

Jerry and Sis Levin are currently living in the West Bank where they work to support Palestinian nonviolent resistance. Jerry is a full time Christian Peacemaker Teams member. (Dr.) Sis works in Bethlehem schools where she is implementing the world's premier comprehensive, preschool-to-university peace education program. I began my interview by asking Jerry and Sis what they would like to share with the Oregon peace community. I quickly learned that Jerry and Sis need no prompting to get straight to the heart of the matter:

Jerry: Well, I've got one [question]. Precisely what is the concern about writing about Palestine?… Why isn't there objection to the steady erosion and taking of Palestinian land,…collective punishment, extra legal assassinations, the theft of water and land in the West Bank and Gaza, the harassment of school children, the invasions of homes arbitrarily by the Israeli army, settlers interfering with the planting, cultivation, and harvesting of crops, the poisoning of the forage for the Palestine sheep and goats. Is there any objection to that by the people who object to talking about Palestine? My question to them is what about the occupation? The occupation is the elephant in the middle of the room.

Sis: I think the word "suicide" needs to be examined. I am on an educational mission of my church, the Episcopal Church, and the fact is my Christian colleges and my Israeli colleagues believe that Israel is committing suicide. The direction that Israel is going in will lead to suicide of a nation. You cannot continue to do what Israel is doing and survive, historically.

When you deal with the word suicide, generally, you want to know the why of it. The why of it seems to be a manipulation in Israel of the holocaust: This happened to us. Nobody came to help us. So, there they [Jewish settlers] are. They have fled there. They have taken up residence there in a land where people live. It was not a land without a people. That the why of it - fleeing what happened to them…and [believing] security is ensured by taking the land away from others and by keeping this iron fisted control, which won't work.

You almost never hear the why of the suicide bombings, which are relatively rare. I'd like to share with you the story of a student in a refugee camp two blocks away from where I live. The Israeli soldiers came in, as they often do, into the camp to implode her home. This was resisted by the girl, her mother, her father, and her fiancé. She was 17 years old. They killed her mother, her father, and her fiancé and locked her in the room with their bodies for three or four days. This girl came out alive and went to the terrorists and said, "Give me the explosives." Now that's the why of it.

It's cycle of violence. It's a cycle of destruction of each other. It needs to be forgotten, abandoned and something else tried. That's what we doing in Palestine with education for peace and I can guarantee that the students from kindergarten to university understand the cycle of violence. It doesn't work. It will never work. The only way out of this is through creative, constructive nonviolent resistance to this brutal occupation.

Joy: If we could back up at bit, I was wondering if both of you could describe what exactly it is that you are doing in the West Bank.

Sis: I am teaching teachers to teach the entire curriculum from the point of view of creating a nonviolent lifestyle…[The program] begins in kindergarten and it goes relentlessly through every step of cognitive development… and it works. It is disarming and children prefer it. [The program] is quite unique. It's the only one in the Middle East and there are very few in America and Europe because we have become a military society.

Joy: Jerry, can you tell us about what CPT is doing in Hebron and At-Tawani?

Jerry: We are trying to interfere nonviolently with the brutal occupation in Hebron and elsewhere in the West Bank in all of it's forms…and trying to call attention to through our writing the relentless confiscations that are taking place, the settlement in the West Bank that goes on every day, the continued building, and also the what I call the underreporting or really lack of reporting of what's going on in the West Bank and Gaza in terms of the suffering of the Palestinian people. These kinds of actions are what I say are taking place behind the radar of mainstream media coverage in the West.

Joy: So what would you describe as the state of Palestinian nonviolent resistance?

Jerry: The state of Palestinian nonviolent resistance is massive. It monumental…The type of resistance is Palestinians simply refusing to leave, simply to get up and go, simply to stand by silently while thousands of their men, women and children are thrown in prison. The fact that Palestinian resistance hasn't erupted into a violent war of defense is one of the great miracles of the 50 or 60 or 100 years.

What the Palestinians have to fight against is what they call the normalization - to not simply accept the occupation, but try to withstand it… they continue to try to get their story told and it's a heartbreaking process for them because there is little or no interest in conventional sources of information in the Western world.

Sis: What is being done to the Israelis is important to look at in the way that is not being looked at. I think that you could characterize it as child abuse. When I see, as I often do, [Israeli setter] children carrying signs saying, "Kill all the Arabs" That is child abuse. If you love Israel you will speak out about this because they are committing suicide themselves.

What we are asking [in Bethlehem] is, "if it were over tomorrow who are we? Is what is happening to Israel going to happen to us? They suffered the holocaust and they came out and this is how they are behaving. God forbid that after all of our suffering that we should behave like that, that we should buy into the idea that the only security in this world is to take away from somebody else and keep them under iron-fisted occupation." This is our critical discussion. It isn't simply end the occupation but who are we as a people and what have we learned. <

Crass and 20th Century Christianity
By Chris Rooney

I was listening to the Crass album *Best Before* for the first time in almost two years today. I can remember feeling uncomfortable listening to their song "Reality Asylum" even back then, before I had fully embraced the Christian religion or gone back to church. It is a song that has been both maligned and praised, in it's time it has been called obscenity, free speech, and any number of other things, it has been banned and censored at various times and even attracted the attention of Scotland Yard to what might have otherwise become an obscure punk rock band. You might never have heard of this band or even know that this song exists; it's been more than twenty-five years since it was written and certainly almost as long since it was recorded or performed live so I will try and explain why this song has been on my mind today and why I think that it poses an important challenge to Christianity, a challenge which has in many respects remained unanswered.

Reality Asylum is six minutes and thirty-seven seconds of polemic against Christianity, against Christ, against the concept of a Trinitarian god, against the resurrection, against God, and against everything that professing Christians believe. It is spliced together with samples of a young girl praying, the sounds of monastic chanting and various other audio clips and instruments. As a track it is a lot closer to an audio collage after the fashion of the Beatles "Revolution Number 9" than it is to the traditionally rigid style of most punk rock songs.

I didn't intend to listen to it when I put the CD into my computer, I actually wanted to skip it but couldn't recall the song's title or where it was on the album and so I shouldn't have been surprised when it turned out not to be the song I had muted in my itunes playlist. Of course once the song had started I decided to listen to it anyway. It was very hard for me to do.

As a self identified Anarchist and Pacifist I have a lot ideologically in common with the band Crass but as a Christian this aspect of their message has always been hard to listen to comfortably.

Above I mention that I think this song poses a challenge to Christianity, a challenge I think that many people, myself included, might find easier to ignore or skip past. For some it might never even be seriously raised or contemplated. It is always easier to be content with the status quo, with business as usual; it is always easier to turn your back than to get spat on, but that is not what we as Christians are here to do. Christ exhorts us to take the hit and offer the other side of our faces for the same beating; we can do nothing less and should never seek to either. And that's why I forced myself to listen to the whole song.

What is this challenge, you might ask? I would answer with another question:

What have we done to the good news of Christ that it would become a poisoned letter to the very people who should be its most vociferous supporters? What have we done to make the marginalised, the radicals, the poor, the anarchists and the pacifists and the punks curse us and strike out at us?

When Christ came to the people of Israel he didn't come first to the politicians, the chief priests, and the leaders of the people, he came to the prostitutes, the beggars, the leprous and mentally ill, he came to the starving, the guerrillas, the anti-Romans, and the people who for what ever reason had been turned out of their communities, he came to the tax collectors and the working class, the fishermen and the stigmatized, he came to the despised.

On his first visit to Jerusalem what did he do in the temple? Did he go and speak with Caiaphas the high priest? Did he entertain with Herod and Pilate? No, he fashioned himself a whip and turned over the tables of those doing business on the temple grounds, he chased out the bankers the people selling and buying animals to sacrifice. In other words he disrupted the status quo, he disturbed "business as usual".

When he spoke of the laws and about how to treat those who abuse and walk all over you he talked not of violent solutions to the problems of living in an occupied land; he preached of a radical forgiveness, he talked about the dignity of the oppressed, he said that they would inherit the earth. The teachings of Christ as contained in the gospels and echoed in the epistles are primarily stories of social justice, of liberation for the prisoners, of dignity and acceptance for the stigmatized, and for aid and comfort to the poor. The gospels and Christ's apostles are messengers of a peaceful insurrection. This is something that can be taken for granted or ignored so very easily two thousand years later.

Why is it that the same marginalised all over the world are so likely to forget these truths? Why are the churches seen by many to be the seats of power when the teachings they hold are about abandoning worldly power and authority as false and returning the power to God?

When Christ was tempted in the desert the devil offered him the powers of the world if only he would bow before him. Christ rebuked Satan and for it was given true power, the power to save the world from itself.

What has happened to this good news? Why is it that many think first of the metaphysical when they think of the Gospels--that Jesus died for our sins—instead of the radical messages of social justice that underscore the whole New Testament?

I spent the rest of today day riding my bicycle around the city trying to think through all of this. The song I started this paper describing to you had left me with a strong feeling of being ill at ease. I could only ask myself what I had done as a Christian to

share this good news, how have I behaved as a disciple of Christ in relation to the people who need this good news the most?

I started by asking myself “why do they hate my religion?” Only it is easy to rattle off a list miles long, replete with two millennia of historical examples of why someone might hate Christians or Christianity, we have a rich history of bad actions attached to the name of our faith. So I tried asking a different question, “What have I done to disprove history? What have I done with my faith?” This question brought on yet more; “What is good news to the drug addicted, to the prostitute, to the man serving time in a federal prison? What is good news to the man or woman who has to steal groceries in order to feed their starving family?” And just as importantly I asked myself “What have I done about this as a Christian? How have I helped to share my faith in their good news?” The answers to these questions were not easy to digest. I give what I can to people when they ask me, but giving money or food to a man on the street is not a solution to the problems that keep him there. I try to protest against unjust laws and against globalisation, I write against capitalism and I try to show support for others who do as well, but when I ask myself “is this enough?” I can’t help but feel that it’s not.

Why do so many public figures praise God with one side of their mouth while they give speeches against the poor with the other? Why do many people donate large sums of money to Christian charities only to write the donations off on their tax returns? Why can a man or woman extol the virtues of faith while depriving other people of the reasons to have faith? Can a four-star general order men to kill each other in far away lands and still feel good about going to church on Sunday?

Can a politician run on a “pro-life” election platform and sleep easy at night after posing for a photo-op as he signs his name arrogantly on a bomb or after denying clemency to people on death row? Can that same “Pro-life” politician feel justified in his beliefs and still do nothing about all the ways the system kills people? Can a President? Can a Prime Minister? And what can I do in my life as a Christian to set this right if only in the smallest personal way?

These are all questions we each ought to ask ourselves at some point or another I just hope that it takes less than the raw anger of a raging polemic against the things that you love in order for you to do it. <

Mural of 9/11/01 on a wall in Iraq, picture taken from Salon.com

“We Believe So We Speak”
2nd Corinthians 4:13

Alex Iwasa is a member of the Socialist Labor Party of America (SLP), http://www.slp.org. He is a roving activist currently learning to become an organic farmer. He can be reached at alexjiwasa@gmail.com he also has a blog at http://socialistfarmer.livejournal.com

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Joy Ellison lives in Vancouver, Washington, USA. She has just returned to Palestine, with Christian Peacemaker Teams. She is looking forward to working in Palestine annually for the next few years. At home, Joy trains people in nonviolence and speaks about her experiences in the holy land. You can learn about her trainings at www.treebythewater.org and her work in Palestine at www.livejournal.com/users/in_palestine

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* * *

Kyle Snyder is a former United States Army Soldier, who served in Iraq in 2005, near the borders of Syria and Turkey. In 2005 he went AWOL and escaped into Canada where he currently lives. He is an outspoken critic of the War on Iraq.

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Karl Germyn, presently lives in Vernon with his cat, Tom. An avid writer, he maintains a web log at http://www.livejournal.com/users/rhykan/, he plays Dungeons & Dragons regularly and is involved in the editing and online promotion of The Christian Radical.

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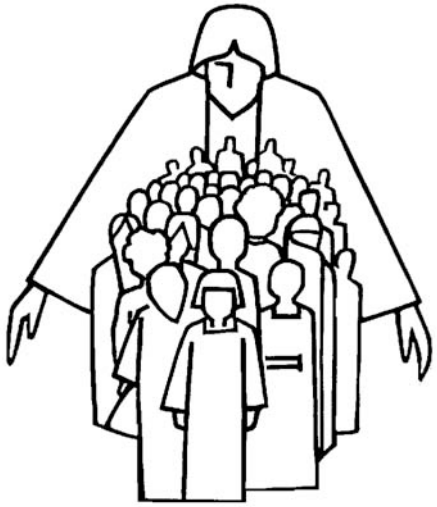
Lisa Farrall is from Australia. A 39 single mother of two, prophet, rock climber, ex-biker, ex-druggie, ex-Pentecostal fundamentalist with Post Traumatic Stress. :-)

In her spare time she paint things, writes and try to work out how to follow Jesus in a country where his words have been twisted to support the kind of religious abuse he opposed. I believe the gospel is supposed to be *good* news to liberate people, not justification for further exploitation.

Writing is a way for her to voice the way she thinks God feels about things

* * *

Steven Woods is currently serving a death sentence at a Federal prison in Texas. He has a blog at www.anarchyinchains.com



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Thank you again for reading.
Chris Rooney, and Karl Germyn
Editors, The Christian Radical

Richard Nixon leaving the Whitehouse in shame